		gorC	2 Tiled 11/11/14 Fage 1 01 20 1	
1		UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT		
2		SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK		
3		In re Application of GORSOAN LIMITED and GAZPROMBANK OJSC for an Order Pursuant to 13 MC 397 (PGG) 28 U.S.C. 1782 to Conduct Discovery,		
4	for			
5	200	.b.c. 1702 to conduct biscov	CI y ,	
6		x		
7 8			New York, N.Y. November 3, 2014 12:30 p.m.	
9	Befo	aro.	12:30 p.m.	
10	HON. PAUL G. GARDEPHE,			
11		non. TAGE G.	District Judge	
12			District stage	
13	APPEARANCES			
14	WHITE & CASE LLP			
15	BY: OWEN C. PELL MAX SHTERNGEL			
16	STUART A. SMITH			
17				
18				
19				
20				
21				
22				
23				
24				
25				
	1			

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

(Case called)

MR. PELL: Owen Pell from White & Case. With me today is Max Shterngel for the plaintiffs, applicants, Gorsoan Ltd. and Gazprombank.

MR. SMITH: Stuart Smith for the movants Rigroup Janna Bullock, Zoe Bullock, and myself.

THE COURT: This is a matter that goes back to a part one assignment I received a long time ago in response to an application for the issuance of subpoenas to certain parties. I signed that application and now there's a dispute as to whether certain subpoenas that I issued should be quashed. What I've been trying to get to the bottom of is whether one of the subjects of the subpoena, a woman named Janna Bullock, was properly served by process from a court in Cyprus, which I will refer to as the Cypriot court. The subject order from the Cypriot court is a freezing and disclosure order. Gorsoan, one of the applicants here, states that Bullock was properly served with a freezing and disclosure order issued by the Cypriot court and that she has failed to comply with that order. Gorsoan further argues that Bullock's noncompliance with the Cypriot court's freezing and disclosure order provides a compelling basis to enforce the subpoena on Bullock, arguing that the information Gorsoan seeks is unavailable in the Cyprus proceedings due to Bullock's noncompliance, citing opposition brief, docket No. 16 at 7.

The background here is that in August of 2012, Gorsoan and Gazprombank filed a civil suit against Bullock and 29 other defendants in the Cyprus Court claiming \$22 million in damages from fraud, citing Tsirides declaration paragraph five, docket No. 4. Gorsoan alleged that it had "invested substantial sums (around U.S. 23 million) in U.S. bonds issued by companies affiliated with the Moscow region government," and that Bullock's ex-husband, Alexey Kuznetsov (then the minister of finance in the Moscow region government), and certain offshore corporate entities owned by Bullock and Kuznetsov diverted proceeds from these bonds and used these funds for their own purposes (Id. paragraphs 20, 22, and 40).

On March 6, 2013, the court in Cyprus issued an order which I've referred to as a freezing and disclosure order. That order froze all the assets of 15 of the defendants named in the Cyprus action, including Bullock, anywhere in the world up to the value of \$26,344,765. It also directed these defendants to disclose all assets that they possessed that exceeded 10,000 pounds in value, and it also directed the remaining defendants to produce documents in their possession relating to those 15 defendants. (Id. paragraphs 11 and 28 through 29).

I have received a declaration from Alexandros

Tsirides, Gorsoan's Cypriot counsel, stating that Bullock was

personally served with the freezing and disclosure order on

April 24, 2013, and that assertion is supported by an affidavit of service. That document is Exhibit 2 to Tsirides's second supplemental declaration. See paragraph four.

However, counsel for Bullock has disputed whether she was, in fact, served with the Cypriot court's freezing and disclosure order on April 24, 2013, as the applicants here assert. More specifically, on March 24, 2014, counsel for Bullock sent a letter to the Court stating that according to Bullock's Cypriot counsel, a Mr. Demetriades, the March 2013 freezing and disclosure order had not been properly served on Ms. Bullock, citing docket No. 20.

Bullock's counsel also noted in that letter that on March 12, 2014, Gorsoan had filed an application with the Cyprus court seeking leave to serve Ms. Bullock's counsel, Mr. Demetriades as substitute service for Bullock. Bullock's counsel argued that it is thus "reasonable to infer that neither Bullock nor Mr. Demetriades has been served." The point is that if Bullock had been personally served on April 24, 2013, then why at a later date would Gorsoan file an application with the Cyprus court seeking leave to serve Ms. Bullock through substitute service on her Cypriot counsel.

Gorsoan did not respond to this assertion, and given that the premise for the application here is that Gorsoan has not been able to get the information from Bullock because she won't comply with the freezing and disclosure order issued by

the Cypriot court, I determined that it was necessary to obtain an explanation for why Gorsoan made an application to the Cypriot court to serve Ms. Bullock through substitute service.

Accordingly, on October 22 of this year, I issued an order directing Gorsoan to "explain whether they sought permission in Cyprus to serve Bullock by substitute means and, if so, why they previously represented to this Court that Bullock had been personally served with the Cyprus court's discovery order," citing docket No. 24.

On October 24, 2014, Gorsoan's counsel submitted a letter and supplemental declaration addressing these issues, citing docket No. 25. The letter states that Bullock has been personally served with the Cyprus court's freezing and disclosure order three times and that Gorsoan is pursuing civil contempt remedies against Bullock in Cyprus for her failure to comply with that order. The attached declaration, which was executed by Alexandros Tsirides, Gorsoan's Cypriot counsel, states that Bullock was first served with a freezing and disclosure order on April 24, as I previously noted, and Mr. Tsirides notes that Bullock's counsel has not explained why service of that order back on April 24, 2013, was invalid under either U.S. or Cyprus law.

The Tsirides declaration then goes on to state, "In order to have Bullock held in civil contempt based on her noncompliance with the freezing and disclosure order [Gorsoan]

first sought and obtained two preliminary orders from the Cyprus court," citing Tsirides's second supplemental declaration at paragraph eight. The Cyprus court issued orders on December 19, 2013, granting Gorsoan leave to serve the freezing and disclosure order on Bullock again, and on October 9, according to Mr. Tsirides, the Cyprus court granted Gorsoan leave to serve its application for contempt against Bullock, and that application apparently also included a copy of the freezing and disclosure order. (Id. paragraph eight, Exhibits 3-4).

On August 5, pursuant to the Cyprus court's order, according to Mr. Tsirides, Bullock was again personally served in New York with a freezing and disclosure order, and in support of that assertion, Mr. Tsirides attaches another affidavit of service, which is Exhibit 5 to his declaration.

Mr. Tsirides goes on to state that on October 20, 2014,

Ms. Bullock was served with a contempt application, which included a copy of the freezing and disclosure order. (Id. paragraph 10, Exhibit 6).

Now, I have questions for both sides, but maybe I should start with Gorsoan and then I'll speak with Bullock's counsel. The question I have, and it's the question that my order was directed at, is if Bullock was properly served on April 24, 2013, with a freezing and disclosure order, why was it necessary to serve her with the order repeatedly. That's my

question. And it may be that in Cyprus procedures are different, I don't know, but in this country, if effective service was made, as is alleged here, in April of 2013, it wouldn't be necessary to continue serving the person repeatedly with the same order. As I said, maybe the practices are different in Cyprus, but I need you to explain that.

MR. PELL: Yes, your Honor. Owen Pell, for Gorsoan.

Your Honor, there are two reasons why service was effected a second time. The reason it was effected the third time is when you move on to the contempt phase, that is a new phase in Cyprus and you have to re-serve.

The reason for the second service was really out of an abundance of caution and to meet objections that had been made by counsel for Bullock in the foreign proceeding. They had raised issues vis-a-vis service. They had also raised issues as to the Hague Convention on service, and so out of an abundance of caution, we went back and served again.

What's important to understand is that this is not a default judgment situation. Bullock has appeared in Cyprus through lawyers and litigated the service issue and lost, and that was why she was ordered to make disclosure. She has chosen not to appeal that ruling in Cyprus. We were trying to make the record as clear as possible that she had been properly served as many different ways as we could think of so that in Cyprus, we could not only proceed with contempt but so that

there was really no ability by the other side to muddy the record in Cyprus, because we really are trying to proceed there and to get more disclosure.

With respect to the 1782 proceeding, as your Honor knows, even if there had been no Cyprus proceeding, we would have been entitled under 1782 to discovery, as long as we had contemplation of a foreign proceeding. Here, there's no question that we have a foreign proceeding. Bullock has participated in it and the two applicants are parties in that proceeding. As to the 1782 application and the motion to quash, the fact that Bullock continues to try to fight discovery in Cyprus need not prevent the subpoenas from going forward and disclosure from occurring here.

THE COURT: All right. Then let me hear from Bullock's counsel.

Mr. Smith, you just heard your adversary say that your client litigated the service issue in Cyprus, she lost, she has not appealed, and she still hasn't complied with the freezing and disclosure order. Do you disagree with anything that counsel just said?

MR. SMITH: I'm not aware, I have no knowledge of any service of process litigation in Cyprus with respect to a previous service. I would simply tell the Court that under 1782, the federal courts here carefully respect foreign procedures, and to the extent that there may be another

proceeding in Cyprus dealing with this contempt citation and service of process, I think it's necessary to await the decision of the Cyprus court in that matter. If it turns out that Bullock has been properly served, that is an issue for the Cyprus court to decide and not, I would respectfully submit, this Court.

I would simply also suggest to the Court that under Cyprus procedures, as Mr. Demetriades's declaration earlier stated, there is no discovery in Cyprus in a civil suit of this sort until the pleadings have closed. Now, for reasons that I can't anticipate, this lawsuit was started in 2012, but the statement of claim, which is analogous to a complaint, wasn't filed by the plaintiff until December 2013. I'm advised by Mr. Demetriades that the answer to that complaint is currently due to be filed on November 14, 2014, so the pleadings haven't closed here, and, under Cyprus law, there is no discovery until the pleadings close.

I would also add that under Cyprus law, there are no depositions; there is simply document production. So the fact that these subpoenas ask here in their application under 1782 for sworn deposition testimony seems to me to be at variance with Cyprus procedure. And since 1782 gives the courts discretion to assist in discovery in a foreign proceeding, the courts here are very careful to make sure that any discovery that is assisted by a federal court here cannot exceed the

scope of this discovery that is available in a foreign proceeding. So on that note, I would simply say that at this juncture, I think the case for the application is not ripe for decision until such time as we get a decision from the Cyprus court that Ms. Bullock has been properly served, because it is their exclusive authority to render such a decision, and the pleadings in the Cyprus case close.

THE COURT: All right. Let me just return to my original question to you, Mr. Smith. What I said to you is that your adversary has represented that Ms. Bullock litigated the service issue in Cyprus, that she lost on that issue, that she has not appealed, and she still has not complied with the freezing and disclosure order. What I want to hear from you and what I asked you is do you dispute that your client, Ms. Bullock, litigated the service issue in Cyprus and that she lost that issue.

MR. SMITH: I have no information as to whether that's correct or not correct, and I have seen no papers filed in this court that indicate that the Cyprus court has so ruled.

THE COURT: Mr. Pell.

MR. PELL: Yes, your Honor. First of all, there is a lot to respond to here because there are so many false premises, it's difficult to know which one to deal with first.

First, your Honor, there could never be or have been a contempt proceeding in Cyprus if the Cyprus court had not

determined that it actually had jurisdiction over Bullock, had ordered discovery, had ordered disclosure and no disclosure was forthcoming. In fact, your Honor, as we said in our papers, we received disclosure from other defendants in Cyprus and that was how we tailored the subpoenas in this proceeding to make sure we were following up on information we had gotten in Cyprus from entities that the Court had ordered to provide information and did. So the fact is Bullock has been served, the Cyprus court knows it, they've appeared in Cyprus, they've litigated. That was all in our papers. It was their burden to join issue on that if they disputed it and to prove otherwise, and they haven't.

THE COURT: Is your position that she was properly served simply an inference from the fact that the Cyprus court issued this contempt order, or is there some document extant in which the Cyprus court makes a finding that she was properly served?

MR. PELL: The fact that she was ordered to make disclosure tells you the Cyprus court believes it had jurisdiction. We then took that proof back to Cyprus. When there were questions raised by opposing counsel as to the Hague Convention, we served her again. It was because we put in all that proof that the court in Cyprus allowed us to proceed to the contempt phase.

THE COURT: Again, is that something I'm to infer, or

25

1 is there a document that actually says that? MR. PELL: 2 That's attached to the affidavits, your 3 Honor. 4 THE COURT: What's attached? 5 MR. PELL: What you're asking for, I believe, is 6 discussed in the Tsirides affidavit. 7 THE COURT: All right. You're telling me that Mr. Tsirides states in his declaration that the Cyprus court 8 9 wouldn't have done this unless she was properly served? Is 10 that your point? Because what I'm actually looking for, I just 11 want to know, is there an order from the Cyprus court stating 12 that she was properly served. 13 MR. PELL: If you look at the Tsirides declaration, paragraphs 34 to 35 --14 15 THE COURT: All right. Just give me a minute. Could you help me with how I can find that in this file? 16 17 MR. PELL: Yes, your Honor. I definitely can. 18 THE COURT: Because I've got quite a few documents in 19 here, and I'm not able to put my finger on it immediately. 20 MR. PELL: Yes, your Honor. 21 THE COURT: And there have been multiple declarations 22 from Mr. Tsirides, so which one is it that we're talking about? 23 MR. PELL: Right. I believe you're talking about the 24 first one, your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. I have the first one.

MR. PELL: And it should be paragraphs 34 to 35.

THE COURT: I'm sorry. I'm looking at the first supplemental declaration of Alexander Tsirides. Is that what I should be looking at?

MR. PELL: Actually, it's this one. Actually, your Honor, the one you want, the court stamp is dated November 27, 2013. It's document four, I believe.

THE COURT: What is its title?

MR. PELL: The title is declaration of Alexandros

Tsirides in support of application for discovery pursuant to 28

U.S.C. Section 1782. I'm happy to share mine, your Honor,

because it has no marks on it.

THE COURT: I'm going to need you to do that because I can't find it in my file.

MR. PELL: There you are, your Honor. And it's paragraphs 34 and 35.

THE COURT: All right. Mr. Smith, I'm looking at one of the declarations Mr. Tsirides has submitted. This one is docket No. 4, and in paragraph 35, Mr. Tsirides asserts, "In the November 2013 decision, the Cypriot court concluded that it has jurisdiction over the dispute, that the service of process on all defendants was done properly and in accordance with applicable regulations, and that there are no procedural irregularities. Bullock and the other defendants who filed the set—aside application have not appealed the November 2013

decision."

Now, my question to you is what do you offer me to dispute that.

MR. SMITH: I think one can infer, your Honor, given the fact that repeated attempts to serve Bullock were done yet again, suggests to me that the petitioners in this case were not confident that the service of process had been properly effected.

THE COURT: As I told you, it was your argument on that point that gave me pause, but now I'm dealing with new evidence that indicates that your client was served on no less than three occasions with the applicable order. I have affidavits of service representing that that happened. I have Mr. Tsirides's declaration about the import of that under Cypriot law, and now I need something solid from you to make a determination that there's a reason to distrust the affidavits of service, Mr. Tsirides's declaration. I need something solid, and counsel has explained why he arranged for or sought substitute service. According to him, it was done out of an abundance of caution, but certain representations have been made both today and in prior affidavits and declarations, and I wanted to give you an opportunity to tell me why I shouldn't accept these representations.

MR. SMITH: Your Honor, since this was not something I was aware of, I would just ask the Court for a brief period of

time to consult with Mr. Demetriades, who is Bullock's Cypriot counsel, for him to be able to address this point because I think it is a critical point, and since it involves a detail of the Cyprus proceeding with which I am not familiar, I would like an opportunity on behalf of the movants to have a brief period to submit an additional document to the Court of explanation.

THE COURT: But I already have a declaration from Mr. Demetriades. I alluded to it in my initial remarks, and it's always been clear in this case that there is a dispute about service. My question to you is what additional information could Mr. Demetriades provide.

MR. SMITH: I think he could address the point of the existence of a Cyprus court ruling with respect to which there was no appeal. That seems to me to be a rather critical aspect of this thing because it may well be that if that is the case and there is no explanation as to why that happened under Cyprus law, then I would agree that that statement in the declaration should be accepted by this Court. But given the fact that this is something that I'm not aware of and that Mr. Demetriades never addressed specifically, I would like to have an opportunity to be able to respond.

THE COURT: I don't know that I need to understand

Cyprus appellate procedure in order to make a finding here that

your client was served. I mean, that's what we're talking

about here. We're talking about whether she was served with this freezing and disclosure order and she has ignored it and not complied with it. That's what I'm interested in, and I've heard from Mr. Pell repeated statements and I've read repeated statements submitted by his client asserting that she was served and, in fact, that she's litigated the issue and, in fact, that she lost the issue in Cyprus.

I don't think I need to understand Cypriot appellate procedure to make a finding that she was served and she has nonetheless chosen to ignore the freezing and disclosure order. That's what I'm interested in, and I'm interested in it because, as I said at the outset, the premise is that applicants have not been able to get this information through the Cypriot proceedings, and your response was, well, my client was actually never served. And what I'm telling you,

Mr. Smith, is I have now a very substantial record indicating that she was actually served three times, with the same order, and she hasn't responded to it.

Now, you say you want to get another affidavit or declaration from Mr. Demetriades explaining to me what the significance is of her decision not to appeal or what that might mean under Cypriot law, and I don't understand why I need to understand Cypriot appellate procedure in order to make a finding.

MR. SMITH: Let me suggest to the Court that

subsequent to the order that the Cyprus court allegedly addressed, there have been other attempted services to which the Cyprus court has never decided whether she was validly served under these orders, and in point of fact, Mr. Pell's own letter to the Court, which came in last week, makes it clear that he has submitted the evidence of service to the Cyprus court, which suggests to me that it's the Cyprus court that has to decide whether she was properly served.

THE COURT: As I understand it, Mr. Pell is asserting that now there are contempt proceedings ongoing in Cyprus as to your client. That's what's going on now, as I understand it.

MR. SMITH: Yes.

THE COURT: And again, there are contempt proceedings going on because she hasn't responded to the freezing and disclosure order.

MR. SMITH: But Mr. Pell, in his letter of October 24 to the Court, said explicitly that the evidence of personal service was submitted to the Cyprus court. Now, the reason, obviously, that was done is because it's the Cyprus court that has the exclusive authority to make a determination as to whether she was properly served under Cyprus law, so I don't think that it would be improper for me to have an opportunity to address this unappealed order allegedly saying that she was properly served a while back.

MR. PELL: Your Honor, I feel like I'm in a game of

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

three-card Monte. First of all, the existence of the Cyprus proceeding does not bear on the ability of this Court to grant a 1782 order and to enforce it. We clearly have a Cyprus proceeding. There is no debate about that. You clearly have evidence that the Cyprus proceeding is proceeding and that my clients are plaintiffs in that proceeding against Mr. Smith's client, the discovery subjects of the 1782 order.

It is fascinating to me that in a proceeding where Mr. Smith's client has chosen not to appear and is now on the verge of being held in contempt he wants to use that Cyprus proceeding now as a foil to prevent 1782 discovery, which is exactly what the Supreme Court in <u>Intel</u> said isn't supposed to The first problem I have is everything he wants to litigate in this court or have this Court wait for Cyprus to litigate is irrelevant because the existence of the Cyprus proceeding is not a necessary element of getting 1782 discovery. But as important, the fact is Mr. Smith already had an opportunity through a Cypriot lawyer to engage on the issues in this record, and he chose not to. There's already an affidavit from their Cypriot lawyer. All they had to do was raise these issues and explain them, but now they're moving the shell again. The shell game is on and now they want you to wait for further proceedings in Cyprus knowing that his client is avoiding doing anything in Cyprus. So all he's trying to do is delay your Honor carrying out the subpoenas.

MR. SMITH: I would simply respond, your Honor, and say I don't think I'm trying to delay things further. I'm simply asking for a brief period of time to explain this one unappealed order of the Cyprus court saying that she was properly served, given the fact that it wasn't responded to. don't think, given the fact that this case has gone on for a while, that if it takes a few more days for me to make a submission of explanation, if there is an explanation, as to why that order making a determination on the adequacy of service was not appealed, I would like to have that opportunity.

MR. PELL: Again, your Honor, even if there had been an appeal of that order, that would be irrelevant here, the fact that the Cyprus court had or doesn't have an appeal. In fact, Mr. Tsirides, in his first supplemental declaration, notes that an appeal by some of the discovery subjects in Cyprus does not affect the enforceability of the judgment ordering Janna Bullock to make disclosure. That's document No. 17 in the record, and that's another thing, no evidence countered to that has been provided by Mr. Smith. So all you're seeing here, your Honor, is they're just dancing, looking for more time, trying to use the Cyprus proceeding as a shield when, in fact, they're about to be held in contempt in that proceeding for not participating in it.

THE COURT: All right. This matter has been pending

almost a year. Mr. Smith, I'm not going to delay this more. I feel like I have given the parties ample opportunity to submit whatever they deem is appropriate, and in good conscience, I can't delay the matter further. I'm going to go forward and decide this application based on the materials that have been submitted, and I'm going to try to do that promptly.

Anything else?

MR. PELL: Thank you, your Honor.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, your Honor.

(Adjourned)